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Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Letter dated 4 April 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Sao Tome and Principe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as representative of the current Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the thirty-second ministerial meeting of the Committee, held from 12 to 16 March 2011 at Sao Tomé, Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Principe (see annex).

I should like to inform you that the ministerial meeting adopted the Sao Tomé Declaration on a Central African Common Position on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter and its annexes as a document of the General Assembly under item 100 (f) of the preliminary list for the sixty-sixth session, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ovidio Manuel **Barbosa Pequeno**
Permanent Representative

* A/66/50.

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Annex to the letter dated 4 April 2011 addressed to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Representative of Sao Tome and Principe to the United Nations

Report of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

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A. Introduction

1. The thirty-second ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC) was held in Sao Tome, Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, from 12 to 16 March 2011.

2. The following member States participated in the meeting: the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

3. The secretariat of the Committee was comprised of members of the United Nations Subregional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC). The Secretary-General of the United Nations was represented by H.E. Bruno Mpondo-Epo, interim Chief of Staff of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa.

4. The following United Nations entities took part in the proceedings: the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (CNUDHD-CA)

5. The following entities also participated as observers: the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

6. The opening ceremony featured:

- A statement by the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Ivor Richard Fung;
- A message from the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, read out by Mr. Roger Mengue Ekomié, coordinator of activities for the Department for Human Integration, Peace, Security and Stability;
- A message from the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, read out by Ms. Alice Mungwa, senior political affairs officer at the Permanent Mission of the African Union to the United Nations;
- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by H.E. Mr. Bruno Mpondo-Epo, interim Chief of Staff of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa;
- A statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of the Congo, H.E. Mr. Basile Ikouébé, Chairman of the Bureau of the Advisory Committee;
- The opening statement by the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Principe, H.E. Mr. Patrice Emery Trovoada.

7. The closing statement was delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Communities of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Principe, H.E. Mr. Manuel Salvador dos Ramos.

B. Summary of the proceedings

I. Election of the Bureau

8. H.E. Mr. Manuel Salvador dos Ramos, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Communities of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Principe, was elected Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa by acclamation.

9. The Committee also elected the following countries as members of the Bureau:

- First Vice-Chairman: Central African Republic
- Second Vice-Chairman: Republic of Equatorial Guinea
- Rapporteur: Republic of Burundi

II. Adoption of the agenda

10. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Election of the Bureau
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Report of the outgoing Bureau
4. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa
5. Implementation of the Sao Tomé Initiative:

   •Status report on signatures and ratifications of the Kinshasa Convention;

   •Implementation of the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa
6. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa:

   • Implementation of the Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities (proliferation of small arms and light weapons and disarmament of civilian populations);

   •Briefing by the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs.
7. Promotion of peace and combating crime in Central Africa:

   •Maritime piracy in Central Africa;

   •Illegal exploitation of natural resources
8. Implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women, peace and security and General Assembly resolution 56/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control
9. Briefing by entities with observer status with the Committee: the African Union and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic

10. Report of the General Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) on the institutional evolution of the subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms, including the status of ratifications of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security Council (COPAX) and of non-aggression and mutual assistance agreements, and the Central African multinational force (FOMAC), and on the development of strategic partnerships

11. Report of the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, including on trafficking in persons, in particular women and children

12. Review of the financial situation of the Committee: Implementation of the Libreville Declaration by member States

13. Place and date of the next meeting

14. Other matters, including the impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa

15. Adoption of the report of the thirty-second ministerial meeting

III. Report of the outgoing Bureau

11. The Committee took note of the report of the outgoing Bureau read by its Chairman. It commended the Chairman and members of the Bureau on the dynamic way in which they had performed their duties, and, in particular, their efforts to promote the signing of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition, Parts and Components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (Kinshasa Convention), the adoption of its Implementation Plan and the substantive and material preparations for the thirty-second ministerial meeting, carried out in close cooperation with the Committee secretariat and the Office of Disarmament Affairs.

IV. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

12. The working paper on the review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa, prepared by the ECCAS secretariat, formed the basis for the exchange of views among States.

13. The Committee commended the ECCAS secretariat for the quality of the working paper submitted for its consideration.

14. The review of the geopolitical and security situation in the subregion focused on three main areas: political and institutional developments, domestic and cross-border security, and issues related to governance, the humanitarian situation and human rights.

15. The discussions pointed up contrasting developments in the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa since the Committee's last meeting. On the one hand, significant progress has been achieved in the consolidation of democratic processes and the normal functioning of institutions. On the other hand, certain States in the subregion have had to deal with worrisome security situations.

16. In the political sphere, the period under review was marked by the preparation and organization of various elections in certain countries in the subregion.

17. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, while the calm that now prevails in some conflict zones is welcome, Central Africa has also had to face a certain number of threats to peace and security, including the resurgence of rampant banditry and acts of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and residual pockets of insecurity in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

18. Member States have undertaken substantial efforts with regard to governance, the humanitarian situation and human rights. Relevant legal and institutional instruments governing these matters continue to be adopted and implemented at the national level.

19. The geopolitical and security situation, country by country, is as follows:

- **Republic of Angola**

20. In the political sphere, Angola is consolidating its democratic process, initiated during its last legislative and presidential elections. With an eye towards the 2012 general elections, the Minister of Territorial Administration announced the launching of a review of the electoral lists under the supervision of 20 political parties, including those which hold seats in Parliament and those which do not. He also announced a review of the electoral laws for the purpose of adapting them to the new Angolan Constitution.

21. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, the authorities are pursuing their efforts to normalize public life as well as their peacebuilding efforts. In that connection, mine clearance and the wide-ranging campaign to collect weapons still in the possession of civilians are bearing fruit.

22. Threats and risks faced by the country include the direct and indirect occurrence of armed conflicts in the subregion, as well as foreign support for forces seeking to destabilize the climate of peace in Angola, particularly in the province of Cabinda. Hostile forces based in Cabinda are attempting to derail Government efforts to carry out the remaining tasks set out in the Memorandum of Understanding for Peace and Reconciliation designed to bring about a complete cessation of hostilities in that part of Angolan territory. Other threats are related to illegal immigration, drug trafficking and even international terrorism, which all seize on the slightest weakness to gain ground and expand their activities.

- **Republic of Burundi**

23. The Republic of Burundi is pursuing its efforts to normalize political and economic life as well as security in the period following the electoral process. Nonetheless, a fringe opposition group, under the umbrella of an alliance of political parties that boycotted the legislative and presidential elections, continues to call for a direct and frank dialogue with Government authorities in order to put an end to the political discord and tension still evident in the country.

24. In response to this concern, a permanent framework for dialogue among the political parties has been established. Similarly, a draft law on the status of the opposition is being elaborated. With a view to strengthening stability and social peace, the Government of Burundi has continued to channel significant efforts into reconciliation and reconstruction, the protection of human rights, the promotion of

good governance, the fight against corruption and the well-being of its population through economy recovery.

25. With the establishment of the Ombudsman as an institution, the Government has just created a permanent framework for mediation between Burundians and the executive branch.

26. Overall, the security situation is satisfactory. However, the persistence of repeated acts of banditry in urban areas, targeted assassinations, armed attacks and the threat of a terrorist attack by the Somali Islamists known as Shebaab in retaliation for the presence of Burundian forces in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) must be noted.

27. With regard to security, the defence and security forces are working together to guarantee order and tranquillity throughout the national territory. To that end, tripartite cooperation among security forces, the administration and the Burundian people, with the involvement of the judiciary, has already yielded very good results.

28. The promulgation of the law establishing the Independent National Human Rights Commission and the establishment of a parliamentary committee to monitor the procedure for recruiting its members constitute a major stride towards ensuring respect for human rights and public freedoms. Cooperation initiatives among Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, through joint operations to combat armed groups sowing disorder and insecurity in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, bear witness to the determination of these three Governments to restore order in that area.

29. At the multilateral level, within the framework of AMISOM, Burundi participates, together with Uganda, in peacekeeping operations in Somalia, which is in the throes of a civil war that has lasted far too long.

- **Republic of Cameroon**

30. Since the Committee's last ministerial meeting, the overall climate in the Republic of Cameroon has been one of peace and stability. In the political sphere, a number of observers have announced the holding of presidential elections scheduled, in principle, for the month of October but for which no official date is known as yet. Much has been happening in this area, particularly electoral registration campaigns and announcements of candidacies, alliances and rallies.

31. This climate of healing was strengthened when President Paul Biya granted an audience to Mr. Ni John Fru Ndi, leader of the Social Democratic Front, the main opposition party, in the margin of the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the Cameroonian army. While there seems to be some lingering scepticism surrounding the neutrality of Elections Cameroon (ELECAM), which is responsible for organizing and supervising the elections, efforts have been made to reassure those who think that ELECAM is in the pay of the ruling party. Thus, during his working visit to Cameroon from 28 February to 1 March 2011, Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, held working meetings with representatives of the political parties represented in the National Assembly and with ELECAM leaders.

32. Overall, the security situation is calm and does not pose any threat to peace in the subregion. Nonetheless, it must be recognized that while Cameroon has made

every effort to hold onto its major achievements of peace and stability, the security situation during the period under review was fraught with tension, owing, in particular, to acts perpetrated by road blockers, urban banditry, and acts of maritime piracy committed in the area of the Bakassi peninsula, including repeated attacks on vessels and hostage-taking by armed Nigerian gangs affiliated with the Niger Delta rebels. Through the determination of the Cameroonian authorities and international cooperation, this hostage-taking was put to an end. The activities of road blockers and urban bandits were vigorously combated by the national security and defence forces.

33. As for issues related to governance, the humanitarian situation and human rights, Cameroon made significant strides that drew the attention of the international community. In that connection, in December 2010, it received a visit from a representative of Amnesty International and, recently, a delegation from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. It also continued its campaign to combat corruption and hold public officials accountable, including through the trials of certain senior civil service officials found to have acted improperly, which are now being conducted.

34. Lastly, efforts to control speculation and the high cost of living, which are underlying causes of social destabilization, in particular the launching, on 1 February 2011, of the Mission to Regulate the Supply of Consumer Products, have helped to improve the daily lives of Cameroonians.

- **Central African Republic**

35. The major political event in the Central African Republic since the Committee's last meeting was the organization of two-round presidential and legislative elections on 23 January 2011, whose high point was the re-election in the first round of Mr. François Bozizé as President of the Republic.

36. These elections took place in the context of, inter alia, the Central African Republic's determination to consolidate its stabilization and democratization process, under way since the holding of the Inclusive Political Dialogue in December 2008.

37. As has been the practice since the adoption of the Brazzaville Declaration of 7 June 2005 on electoral support for ECCAS member States engaged in election processes, ECCAS deployed an international election observation mission in the country. The mission was tasked mainly with monitoring polling and ballot-counting operations in accordance with the relevant provisions of the ECCAS Election Observation Guidelines. International organizations such as the International Organization of la Francophonie, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and the African Union also deployed observers. At the end of the mission, the overall assessment was that the elections in the Central African Republic had generally proceeded peacefully and without the kind of obstacles that would call the results into question.

38. Domestic and cross-border security, however, has remained precarious. Acts of violence continued to be reported in the north of the country, orchestrated by the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace and the Ugandan rebels in the Lord's Resistance Army. Nonetheless, security was not compromised during the electoral

process, as the main political actors had signed and observed a truce and a code of good conduct which precluded recourse to violence.

39. Despite this sensitive climate, the Central African authorities and the first Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) have continued to furnish major efforts; for the elections, they increased their strengths and their presence on the ground.

40. The United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) came to an end on 31 December 2010. The Central African armed forces took over from the international forces in order to pursue operations and thereby avoid the creation of a security vacuum in the north-eastern part of the territory along the border with Darfur. It should also be emphasized that the Central African defence and security forces are sorely lacking in materiel and equipment to carry out their mission to guarantee the security of persons and property, refugees, displaced persons and humanitarian personnel in the region. Therefore, in October 2010, the Government of the Central African Republic appealed, in the Security Council, to friendly countries and the international community to provide support for strengthening the operational capacities of its armed forces so that they might fully perform their duties.

- **Republic of the Congo**

41. Congolese political life is stable. The Government continues to deploy efforts to maintain peace and stability, particularly in the Department of Pool where the results of the national campaign to disarm ex-combatants and collect their weapons have continued to be positive. In order to consolidate progress in that area, the various government departments dealing with security issues consult each other on a regular basis.

42. With regard to governance, the Congolese authorities are making every effort to carry out a national plan to combat corruption. With regard to humanitarian issues, the Government continues to provide assistance to numerous refugees on Congolese soil, in particular those coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. Implementation of the tripartite agreements among the Congo, the refugees' countries of origin and the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) is proceeding normally. As a result, timetables have been established for voluntary repatriation activities in 2011 that will result in the cessation of refugee status.

43. Tripartite meetings were also organized between the Congo, Gabon and UNHCR in 2010. That approach is also being taken with the Republic of Angola where the three parties (Congo, Angola and UNHCR) are to attend a second tripartite meeting at Pointe-Noire to assess the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the tripartite meeting on Angolan refugees living in the Congo, held in Cabinda on 17 and 18 March 2009.

44. In the area of human rights, the universal periodic review of the Republic of the Congo took place in May 2009. A template to follow up implementation of the 50 recommendations that came out of it was developed in collaboration with the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa. The template was approved at a workshop held in Brazzaville on 1 and 2 March 2011 with the Centre's support. The Congo now has a law on the protection of the rights

of indigenous populations. It should be noted that the Government of the Congo hosted the second International Forum on Indigenous Populations in Central Africa, held in Impfondo, in the Department of la Likouala.

45. The Congo has announced its candidacy for the Human Rights Council for the period 2011-2014 and, in that connection, seeks the support of States members of the Committee, aware that security, development and human rights are mutually reinforcing. Its candidacy was endorsed by the recent Summit of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in January 2011.

- **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

46. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has continued its efforts to preserve a climate of peace and stability throughout the territory. Two major political events — preparations for the 2011 presidential elections and the recent review of the country's Constitution — are particularly noteworthy.

47. In preparation for the elections to be held at all levels in November 2011, the electoral roll has been updated, the National Independent Electoral Commission Organization and Functions Act has been promulgated and the Commission's members have been appointed.

48. During the review of the Constitution, some of its articles were amended. The key points of these amendments concern the electoral system for the presidential election, which now requires a simple majority of the votes cast, and establishment of the right of the country's deputies and senators to return to a former post upon leaving a political office incompatible with such a post.

49. The security situation has improved considerably except in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Orientale, where there are several residual pockets of insecurity. The Committee strongly condemned the attacks on the residence of the Head of State of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

50. At the diplomatic level, the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to strengthen its relations with its neighbours to the east, Rwanda and Burundi.

51. With respect to the humanitarian situation, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the context of its zero-tolerance policy and its desire to put an end to all forms of human rights violation, inter alia, has initiated judicial proceedings against a Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo officer and troops for the rape of women in early 2011.

- **Gabonese Republic**

52. The overall situation in the Gabonese Republic has, as ever, been peaceful and stable.

53. The political situation has, however, been marked by an unexpected event: André Mba Obame declared himself "President of Gabon" and appointed an 18-member "insurrectional government" 17 months after the 2009 presidential election won by President Ali Bongo Ondimba. Immediately thereafter, Mr. Mba Obame and his team took refuge in the Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Libreville.

54. This act led the Government to dissolve the Union nationale, the opposition party to which Deputy Mba Obame belongs, and to demand that his parliamentary immunity should be lifted, that the persons in question should be brought before the competent courts and that the State officials involved should be removed from office.

55. The actions of Deputy Mba Obame and his comrades raised political tensions in the country and justified the unusual deployment of security forces at strategic locations in the capital, Libreville.

56. Looting and defiance of the authorities have even led to arrests in Libreville. Direct mediation by the United Nations led to the peaceful return of the UNDP premises.

57. Concerning humanitarian matters, the Committee noted with satisfaction the consultations held by the Congo, Gabon and the Office of UNHCR with a view to a solution to the situation of the 9,000 Congolese refugees who have been in Gabon since the 1997 civil war.

58. The initiative against human trafficking, and particularly trafficking in children, resulted in their repatriation to their countries of origin and the arrest of the perpetrators.

59. Since the last meeting of the Committee, Gabon has been preparing actively to co-host, with Equatorial Guinea, the Africa Cup of Nations (Football) in January 2012.

60. The willingness of Gabon and Equatorial Guinea to find a peaceful solution to their border dispute, including the issue of ownership of the island of Mbanié, has also been noted with relief.

61. After several rounds of negotiations, the two parties, through their respective Heads of State, met recently in New York through the mediation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in order to continue negotiations with a view to seeking a legal solution from the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

- **Republic of Equatorial Guinea**

62. Since the last meeting of the Committee, political activities in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea have focused primarily on preparations for two major events: the holding of the seventeenth ordinary session of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union on the theme "Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development" and the joint hosting, with the Gabonese Republic, of the Africa Cup of Nations (Football) in January 2012. Equatorial Guinea has requested the help of all States members of the Committee in ensuring the success of these important events.

63. To that end, significant efforts to strengthen peace and security in the country in the run-up to these two events are currently under way.

64. The willingness of Gabon and Equatorial Guinea to find a peaceful solution to their border dispute, including the issue of ownership of the island of Mbanié, has also been noted with relief.

65. After several rounds of negotiations, the two parties, through their respective Heads of State, met recently in New York through the mediation of the Secretary-

General of the United Nations in order to continue negotiations with a view to seeking a legal solution from the International Court of Justice in The Hague. During the period under review, domestic and border security have been characterized by stability and normal functioning of the national security services. However, Equatorial Guinea continues to face problems in controlling the constant migration flows into its territory and the rise of banditry in its cities.

66. In that context, the authorities have decided to strengthen bilateral cooperation with the Republic of Cameroon through a joint ad hoc cross-border security committee. In addition, Equatorial Guinea has invested heavily in expansion of the country's economic and social infrastructures.

67. In 2011, not only will the Republic of Equatorial Guinea host the African Union Summit, but His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo has been elected President of the African Union for the current year. For the past three years, the Government has been implementing the Plan of Action for the Economic and Social Development of Equatorial Guinea, Horizon 2020, adopted at the second national economic conference in 2007. Among the primary strategic areas of this Plan of Action, which is fully consistent with the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, are diversification of the economy and poverty reduction with a focus on improving basic social services such as education, health, housing and the advancement of women with a gender perspective, including through infrastructure development and expansion of the new information and communication technologies sector. In short, the Plan envisages the implementation of programmes and projects in all social and economic sectors in order to ensure the country's sustainable human development by 2020.

68. Equatorial Guinea has just signed a headquarters agreement with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The signing of this agreement, together with other past and current activities in the country, is proof of the Government's commitment to and desire for further progress in fostering and maintaining international peace and security, respect for international humanitarian and human rights law and sustainable human development.

- **Republic of Rwanda**

69. Since the last meeting of the Committee, the overall situation in Rwanda has been characterized at the domestic level by stability and normal functioning of its institutions and at the bilateral and multilateral levels by new developments, the encouraging results of which demonstrate significant progress in stabilization of the various States of the subregion.

70. At the domestic level, since the last presidential election the country has been engaged in democracy-building and economic and social development.

71. Domestic and cross-border security has continued to be efficiently maintained despite signs of the return of armed groups hostile to the Kigali Government along the eastern border of the country. At the same time, the Rwandan authorities have reported collaboration between three former high-ranking Rwandan army officers in exile and a coalition of rebel combatants from the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, whose bases were dismantled in the Kimia I and Kimia II operations in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The authorities

suspect these former officers of having planned the recent grenade attacks in the city of Kigali.

72. In January 2011, these former soldiers were convicted in absentia of desertion and the trial concerning the grenade attacks is under way. These events demonstrate the need for increased vigilance on the part of the security and defence forces in order to prevent a breach of the peace in the country, which is successfully engaged in reconstruction in the wake of the 1994 Tutsi genocide.

73. Bilateral and multilateral relations between Rwanda and the countries members of the Committee have improved in recent months owing to the normalization of relations with neighbouring countries. Strengthened cooperation within the framework of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), the Economic Community of Eastern Africa and the ICGLR augur well for the stability of Rwanda and the subregion.

74. In this context, tripartite meetings between the Congo, Rwanda and UNHCR have been held at both the ministerial and the technical levels. These meetings have increased awareness of the need for Rwandan refugees to return to their countries of origin. As a reminder, UNHCR has announced that the refugee status cessation clause will apply to Rwandans which still have refugee status as at 31 December 2011.

75. Also worthy of mention is the meeting of defence ministers of the CEPGL countries, held in Kigali on 31 January 2011, at which it was decided to establish a common joint (army-police) force to combat terrorism in member countries. Members of the joint force will receive training appropriate to this type of operation. In that connection, a meeting of presidents of the parliaments of CEPGL member countries, in which the President of the Belgian Parliament also participated, was held in Kigali on 8 and 9 March 2011 on the theme of strengthening peace, security and economic integration. During the meeting, the participants recommended that the Governments of the member States of the Community should, inter alia, establish a joint military force in order to strengthen peace and security in the CEPGL region and should expand mechanisms for implementing economic integration projects in countries members of the Community.

76. In the areas of governance and human rights, the Government has made remarkable progress at a time when many of the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide are being prosecuted before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, and the national courts.

- **Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe**

77. The overall political situation in the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe was primarily one of healing, the normal functioning of institutions and stability following successful completion of the 2010 municipal, regional and legislative elections. The legislative elections were carried by the opposition party, led by Mr. Patrice Emery Trovoada's Acção democrática independente, and he was appointed Prime Minister.

78. In that connection, the country has begun preparations for the presidential election to be held in the second half of 2011. There has already been a resurgence of activity in political circles in the run-up to this election. Now that the National

Electoral Commission has been established, the process can begin. The domestic and cross-border security situation is stable.

79. Concerning governance, the Committee encouraged the Government to pursue its policy of reform of the justice, defence and security sectors. With regard to the economy, despite the difficult situation, the Government has introduced a number of measures to improve the macroeconomic situation with a view to reducing poverty, combating corruption, constructing and modernizing public infrastructure and implementing projects in the areas of rural development and water, energy, education, health care and food security.

- **Republic of Chad**

80. There has been significant progress in the overall situation in the Republic of Chad since the last meeting of the Committee. At the political level, relations with Sudan have normalized and as for domestic policy, the dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition has been fruitful. Over 100 political prisoners were granted amnesty at the fiftieth anniversary celebration on 11 January 2011. In that spirit, a new election timetable for 2011 has been adopted despite some disagreements between the ruling party and the opposition; thus, the electoral cycle began with legislative elections held on 13 February 2011.

81. The ruling party, the Mouvement patriotique pour le salut, obtained an absolute majority with 133 of the 188 seats in the National Assembly. As in the case of the Central African Republic, ECCAS deployed to the country a team of observers who witnessed the transparency and credibility of the elections.

82. The country is now preparing for the presidential election to be held during the first half of 2011.

83. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, the peace process has been encouraging and is proceeding under politically favourable circumstances. The legislative elections took place without clashes, to the satisfaction of all international observers and opposition political party leaders.

General recommendation

84. The Committee recommends that the States members focus on establishing the desired outcome of the consideration of the review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa.

V. Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative

- **Status of signatures and ratifications of the Kinshasa Convention**

85. The Committee took note of the steps taken by the competent authorities of the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of Rwanda to sign and ratify the Kinshasa Convention as soon as possible, preferably before the thirty-third ministerial meeting.

86. The Committee also welcomed the efforts made by the competent authorities of the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, the Gabonese Republic and the Republic of Chad to achieve swift

ratification of the Kinshasa Convention so that it can enter into force during the twentieth anniversary of the Committee, in 2012, at the latest.

87. The Committee is gratified by the renewed commitment of States members to put the relevant provisions of the Kinshasa Convention implementation plan into effect, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

- **Implementation of the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa**

88. The Committee took note with interest of the measures taken by the ECCAS Secretariat to internalize the Code of Conduct through a meeting of the Defence and Security Committee of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) scheduled for April 2011. The Committee welcomed the readiness of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) to assist States members, in collaboration with the ECCAS Secretariat, with dissemination of and training on the Code of Conduct. It also noted the law adopted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on restructuring of the Forces armées congolaises which takes into account the relevant provisions of the Code of Conduct and permits dissemination of the Code. Burundi has also incorporated the relevant provisions of the Code of Conduct into its domestic legislation. Cameroon is now at the stage of harmonizing its domestic legislation with the Code of Conduct.

89. In the Republic of the Congo, implementation of the Code of Conduct has not encountered major difficulties, because in the aftermath of social and political unrest in 1997 and 1999, several measures were taken to regulate the behaviour of the armed and security forces in the performance of their duties. The provisions of the Code of Conduct were already present in the key legislation on the armed and security forces, in particular the general statutes on the military and gendarmes, the Special National Police Personnel act and Decree No. 2007-159 of 14 February 2007 on the establishment of a standing technical committee for education on international humanitarian and human rights law within the law enforcement agencies.

90. To apply the provisions of the above-mentioned legislation, directives are adopted annually by the ministers responsible for the armed forces and the gendarmerie and by the minister responsible for the police to provide civics education and education on international humanitarian and human rights law within the law enforcement agencies, often with the multifaceted support of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). A training course for international law instructors was held from 24 to 28 January 2011. It should be noted that six officers from the Republic of Equatorial Guinea received the training.

91. With regard to defence and security forces which are military in nature (forest rangers and customs agents), specific laws are now being drafted, and some provisions of the Code of Conduct will be taken into account.

92. The Committee reaffirmed the importance of the Code of Conduct as a tool for consolidating democratic governance of the security sector in Central Africa.

VI. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa

• Implementation of the Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities (proliferation of small arms and light weapons and disarmament of civilian populations)

93. The Committee took note with interest of the briefings by certain member States on the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in their respective countries. They also heard about the measures taken to address the problem in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action and the 2003 Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities.

94. In this context, the Committee noted with interest the briefing of the representative of the Republic of Angola on implementation of its programme of collection of arms from the civilian population consisting of four stages: (a) awareness-raising; (b) voluntary arms collection; (c) forced arms collection; (d) assessment of all activities carried out. While the programme carried out by the competent authorities of the Republic of Angola is at the stage of forced arms collection, awareness-raising is ongoing.

95. With regard to the possession, bearing and use of firearms, the National Assembly of Angola has approved for ratification the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its additional protocols through its resolution 21/10 of 22 June 2010. In addition, a discussion is now taking place on legislative instrument No. 3778, which has, since 1967, governed matters related to the import, sale, possession, use and bearing of firearms. Application of this instrument has become difficult owing to its inconsistency with new developments. It has therefore been redrafted to bring it into alignment with the new Constitution.

96. The intent of redrafting legislative instrument No. 3778 of 1967 is to achieve conceptual unity regarding types of firearms, their spare parts, munitions and components, as well as their operation. The intent of redrafting this important instrument is also to provide and update training courses, examinations and granting of licences to use and bear firearms. Changes in some of the rules of conduct for owners of firearms have also been taken into account.

97. Moreover, the redrafting takes into account the ban on using and bearing arms by people under the influence of alcohol, narcotic drugs or any other psychotropic substance. By the same token, the legal regime governing indoor and outdoor firing ranges and procedures which must be complied with when engaging in activities related to armoury management and managing indoor and outdoor firing ranges have been revised. Criminal and penal liability of offenders under legislative instrument No. 3778 has also been revised.

98. Owing to the successful implementation of the civilian disarmament programme, the Government of Angola has decided to extend it through 2012. However, the competent authorities still do not offer any financial compensation for the voluntary surrender of firearms by the population in order to prevent continued trafficking. During the month of November 2010 alone, 1,570 weapons were voluntarily surrendered, while 241 weapons were collected by force. 419 chargers, 9,084 munitions and 176 explosives have been collected. Weapons and munitions collected since 2008, including those just mentioned, now total 79,588 firearms,

43,159 chargers, 333,243 munitions and 125,991 explosives. In addition, a total of 30,674 weapons and 11,078 explosives have been destroyed.

99. The Committee also welcomed the existence in the Republic of Burundi, since 29 April 2006, of a national commission to disarm civilians and combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The disarmament of the civilian population is a challenge for the country's stability. The Committee thus welcomed the fact that over three years, the Burundian authorities have gathered close to 80,000 small arms, out of an estimated 100,000 held by the civilian population.

100. To consolidate the achievements of the national civil disarmament campaign held from 19 to 28 October 2009, the Government of the Republic of Burundi has just established a standing committee to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Its members include representatives of 10 ministries and civil society. The Government of Burundi has also received software from UNREC for registering arms brokers and brokering licences and has participated in the development of a guide to best practices for practical disarmament in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and neighbouring countries, which was coordinated by the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA).

101. An awareness-raising workshop on the guide was held in Bujumbura in October 2010 for the Burundian national authorities. The adoption of a national action plan is under way, and all weapons voluntarily surrendered and seized, as well as obsolete weapons in police storage, are being destroyed. Computerization of State weapons management is at an advanced stage, with receipt of the required information technology material and necessary training from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) pending. As current President of the East African Community, Burundi participated in the work of the Arms Trade Treaty preparatory committee, held in New York from 28 February to 4 March 2011. Burundi presented the common position of the States members of the Community and its own position with regard to the Treaty being drafted. It also received a third marking machine from the Committee as well as information technology and logistical material to support the operations of its National Commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

102. Although it has not been involved in a war, the Republic of Cameroon has had to face the phenomenon of proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially in its border areas. Through its Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, the Government has undertaken a campaign to dismantle clandestine traditional weapons factories.

103. In addition, Cameroon hosted a joint meeting of RECSA and ECCAS, held in Yaoundé on 7 and 8 December 2010, on small arms and light weapons. The meeting was organized with the technical logistical support of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. Its purpose was to establish Central Africa's priorities in the area of control of small arms and light weapons in the context of a project financed by the European Union in support of the African Union.

104. In the context of implementation of various disarmament programmes, the Government of the Republic of the Congo has established a National Commission for the coordination of policies to combat proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It has also engaged in capacity-building in security institutions for control

of these weapons, with special emphasis on training armoury managers and capacity-building in cross-border cooperation to control circulation of small arms and light weapons. The joint DRC-Congo Forces Armées Security Commission plays a major role in keeping the peace on the two countries' borders.

105. A new disarmament and reintegration programme will be carried out starting in 2011. This programme, which involves 3,500 of an estimated 5,000 ex combatants, will be conducted in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme. It will receive $6 million, with $4 million provided by UNDP and $2 million by the Government of the Congo.

106. Another project called "Transitional project for the reintegration of ex-combatants and women associated with armed groups", involving 150 women associated with armed groups and 150 ex-combatants, will be undertaken in the Pool region. It will be executed with UNDP funding of around $350,000 for a period of three months, from July to September 2011.

107. In order to reconcile ex-combatants receiving support from the National Programme for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (PNDDR) with their communities, 33 community-support sub-projects selected and endorsed by regional PNDDR committees have been financed and implemented. The process of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating ex-combatants is hampered by one major difficulty — particularly with regard to cooperation, assistance and capacity-building — namely, lack of funds for the effective implementation of the various programmes. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is deeply committed to combating the proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons. To achieve that goal, it appears that bilateral and multilateral partners will need to continue supporting the Government in its implementation of the various disarmament programmes.

108. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is committed to combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, at the national, regional and international levels. At the national level, relevant regulations have been adopted, including Ministerial Decree No. 020/2008 of 30 May 2008 on the organization and operation of the National Commission for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the draft law on the prevention, control and reduction of small arms and light weapons and ammunitions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As for operational activities, the Commission has established a programme of activities at the national, subregional and international levels endorsed by the Minister of the Interior and Security.

109. This programme has produced a number of concrete results, including the destruction of more than 108,264 weapons of various calibres, destruction of more than 810 tons of ammunition, gathering of all experts accredited by the 27 ministries, State institutions and civil society and organization of 102 capacity-building workshops for State and non-State actors. Two studies have been conducted, one on the Government's ability to control small arms and light weapons, and another on the ownership and circulation of weapons in the eastern part of the country.

110. In terms of awareness-raising, 65 sessions have been conducted for State and non-State actors, with the support of UNDP and other partners, on the danger of illegal ownership of small arms and light weapons. The Democratic Republic of the

Congo has also undertaken major activities, including execution of the Ituri pilot project on community disarmament with the support of the Crisis Prevention and Recovery Office (BCPR), and establishment of branches of the National Commission in Katanga, North Kivu, South Kivu, Eastern and Bas-Congo provinces.

111. The National Commission is also engaged in an intensive resource mobilization exercise with a wide range of partners (UNDP, the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) and the Government of the United States of America), in order to maximize execution of its workplan. At the subregional, regional and international levels, the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to participate in various meetings and mechanisms dedicated to combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

112. The Committee reiterated the urgent need for the establishment of a Small Arms and Light Weapons Unit in the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Secretariat. It welcomed ongoing efforts to operationalize the Unit as soon as possible. The Committee also recommended that the Unit's activities should be expanded to include all the other aspects of disarmament, considering international developments on arms control relating to several other types of weapons that constitute a threat to peace and stability in the Central African subregion.

- **Briefing by the Office for Disarmament Affairs**

113. The Committee followed with interest the briefing given by the Secretary on the latest international developments in the area of disarmament and arms control. The briefing focused on weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and conventional weapons.

114. In that context, and with regard to conventional weapons, the Committee took note of the fact that the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (new START treaty) came into force on 5 February 2011. Under the Treaty, each party shall, within seven years after its entry into force, limit the aggregate number of its strategic nuclear weapons as follows: 800, for missile launchers; 700, for deployed launchers; and 1,550, for warheads on deployed missile launchers. Entry into force of the Treaty partially implements one of the actions agreed to at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

115. With regard to the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty making Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone, the Committee was informed that the first Conference of the Parties had been held in Addis Ababa on 4 November 2010. In addition, the structures for implementing that important treaty were already in place. Given its technical expertise, UNREC has been approached by the African Union Commission to train the 15 members of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy.

116. With regard to conventional weapons, an open-ended meeting of government experts on the marking, record-keeping and tracing of small arms will be held in New York. That one-week meeting, to which States members of the Committee are

encouraged to send police, customs and border control experts, will be held from 9 to 13 May 2011.

117. The issue of securing stockpiles of conventional weapons remains a major concern for the international community. A large amount of the ammunition circulating among non-governmental actors seems to have been diverted from government security forces — proof of the urgent need to better secure ammunition stockpiles. These stockpiles also represent an additional danger for civilian populations in densely populated areas. Ammunition depots have exploded in a certain number of countries, causing thousands of casualties; the most recent disaster occurred last month in the United Republic of Tanzania.

118. The United Nations is currently developing guidelines for securing ammunition stockpiles as part of the UN Safer*G*uard Programme. With regard to the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions, the States Parties to the Convention held their first meeting in Vientiane, where they adopted the Vientiane Declaration and the Vientiane Action Plan for the effective and timely implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

119. The States Parties decided that an informal intersessional meeting would be held in Geneva from 27 to 30 June 2011 to discuss substantive issues. They also decided that a second meeting of the States Parties would be held in Beirut from 12 to 16 September 2011.

120. With respect to the process of elaborating and negotiating an arms trade treaty, and pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/48, an additional session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2012 Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty was held in New York from 28 February to 4 March 2011, with the participation of some States members of the Advisory Committee. Given the importance of the topic, the Committee heard a presentation from the Secretary explaining the content of the Treaty, including its scope, criteria and parameters, and the signing, ratification and implementation process.

121. The Committee welcomed the Preparatory Committee's recommendations on the elements that would be needed to attain an effective and balanced legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons. Following the discussions, and given the importance of the topic, States members adopted a common Central African position on the Treaty, the so-called "Sao Tome Declaration", annexed to the present report (see annex I).

122. The Committee also took note with interest of the principal activities carried out by UNREC in support of or in collaboration with the African Union, the regional economic communities and African States. In that regard, the Committee welcomed the actions already taken by the African Union Steering Committee on Small Arms. It urged UNREC to continue providing wide-ranging support to African States in their efforts to reduce armed violence and achieve balanced socio-economic development, and to regulate arms brokering in Africa.

123. The Committee also urged UNREC to continue providing assistance to African States to help them harmonize their national laws on small arms and light weapons, develop training modules for security forces on the topic of arms control, and design and develop trade management software and databases on national laws and regulations concerning firearms.

VII. Promoting peace and combating insecurity and crime in Central Africa

• Maritime piracy in Central Africa

124. The Committee followed closely the statements of the Republic of Angola, the Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, the Republic of Cameroon and the ECCAS Secretariat on continued acts of maritime piracy, which represents a challenge to the security and economy of the Central African subregion and a threat to peace and security for the entire international community.

125. The Committee reiterated its concern at the continued acts of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and strongly condemned the recent attacks against some of its States members, in particular against Cameroon.

126. In that regard, the Committee urged ECCAS to speed up implementation of its strategy to combat maritime piracy in Central Africa. It also took note of the meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the countries of zone D of the Gulf of Guinea, held in Pointe-Noire from 11 to 13 February 2011, on the signing of the maritime security plan known as "SECMAR II".

127. The Committee welcomed the other institutional and operational measures taken individually and collectively by States, including the operation of joint patrols by some countries since the signing, under the auspices of ECCAS, of the first maritime security plan (SECMAR I).

128. The Committee reiterated its recommendation to the ECCAS Secretariat to put into operation as soon as possible the Pointe Noire Centre régional de sécurisation maritime de l'Afrique centrale (CRESMAC), pursuant to the decision taken by the fourteenth ordinary session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS, held in Kinshasa on 23 and 24 October 2009.

129. The Committee again recommended that ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission should organize an international maritime conference bringing together all the States members of the Committee, donors and other international stakeholders. The Committee welcomed the statement by Cameroon — annexed to the present report (see annex II) — that it was prepared to host an international conference on maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and urged it to undertake consultations with the secretariats of ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations to that effect.

• Illegal exploitation of natural resources

130. The States had a preliminary exchange of views on the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the subregion, acknowledging that the phenomenon had a real impact on peace and security and affected many areas.

131. The Committee decided to remain seized of the matter at its next ministerial meeting.

132. The Committee recommended to the Secretariat to submit, at its thirty-third ministerial meeting, an information paper listing the documents adopted and initiatives taken in Africa and elsewhere to combat the illegal exploitation of natural

resources, including the final declaration of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held on 15 December 2010 in Lusaka.

133. In order better to frame the discussion on the issue, the Committee asked the Secretariat to recast that agenda item as follows: "Illegal exploitation of natural resources and its impact on peace and security in Central Africa".

VIII. Implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women, peace and security, and General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

134. The Committee reaffirmed the complementary nature of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) as well as General Assembly resolution 65/69, and emphasized that these resolutions are essential tools for the prevention and resolution of conflicts and for peacebuilding and reconstruction in Central Africa.

135. The Committee welcomed the efforts by member States to implement all Security Council resolutions on the relationship between women, peace and armed conflict, including through the adoption of specific national action plans. In that connection, the Committee noted with great interest communications from the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, the Republic of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of the Congo, urging incorporation of the gender dimension and involvement of women in the promotion of security, peace and disarmament.

136. The Committee encouraged the member States to continue application of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

IX. Briefing by organizations which have observer status with the Committee: the African Union and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA)

137. The Committee noted with interest the briefing by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) and welcomed its contribution to the efforts to strengthen peace and security in that country.

138. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the quality of support that BINUCA had provided to the Central African Republic since its establishment, under its mandate in the areas of governance, the successful holding of elections, the conduct of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration operations, and the implementation of security sector reform.

139. In this respect, the Committee welcomed the multifaceted support provided by BINUCA and other external partners to the electoral process as a whole in the Central African Republic. It noted the key role played by BINUCA in the country in overseeing and coordinating all activities involved in planning and conducting the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

140. The Committee also welcomed the collaboration between BINUCA and the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX), which had been given a number of mandates under the framework document adopted on 20 November 2008 in Libreville, Gabon, on the launching of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

141. The Committee also heard with great interest the presentation by the African Union on its peace and security activities, particularly those established for the countries of Central Africa. In this context, the Committee welcomed the opening by the African Union Commission of various liaison offices in Central Africa, particularly in Bujumbura, Bangui, Kinshasa, Goma and Yaoundé.

142. In addition to the liaison offices, the African Union is developing specific programmes to follow up on cross-cutting issues related to the promotion of peace, in particular the borders programme, which is active in Central Africa, and the African post-conflict reconstruction and development policy. The Committee urged the African Union to continue its collaboration with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, in order to provide support to countries in Central Africa such as Burundi and the Central African Republic, which are on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

143. The Committee also welcomed the organization by the African Union of meetings on the Mbororo pastoral nomads in Central Africa. It welcomed the activities carried out by the African Union to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, reform the security sector, apply Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and combat maritime insecurity as part of its overall strategy of maritime security and safety in Africa.

X. Report by the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) on the institutional evolution of the subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms, including ratification of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) and of non-aggression and mutual assistance agreements, and the Central Africa multinational force (FOMAC) as well as on development and strategic partnerships

144. The Committee took note of the briefing by the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) on the development of its structures and mechanisms for peace, security and stability.

145. Over the past six months, ECCAS, like some other regional economic communities on the continent, has considered a partnership project with the Government of the United States. The Council of Ministers of COPAX received the initial materials related to the project in N'Djamena on 4 April 2010, and asked the Secretariat to resubmit the project for approval after providing further necessary materials.

146. The American authorities had sought to conclude an aid agreement with ECCAS, while the Secretariat had endeavoured to obtain official approval for the

actual signing of the agreement, which did not provide for the possibility of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) activity there.

147. With regard to other COPAX resources, i.e., the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC) and the Central Africa Multinational Force (FOMAC), intervention capacity-building is proceeding normally. The Government of Equatorial Guinea recently provided premises in Malabo to house the network of Central African parliamentarians, which is a new unit within ECCAS. Since the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) already has a parliament, the streamlining project now under way will determine the choice of one or two parliaments.

148. The Committee welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in Libreville on 2 March 2011. It is committed to cooperating actively with this new Office to achieve its mission, particularly in the area of conflict prevention and management. It urges all member States and international partners to give the Office their full support. The Committee noted the participation of ECCAS in the African peace and security architecture. ECCAS is also continuing its multifaceted support to the Central African Republic, through the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) with backing from the European Union. The Committee noted that dynamic cooperation on disarmament between ECCAS, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) and the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) is ongoing.

XI. Report of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, including on trafficking in persons, especially women and children

149. The Committee heard with interest the presentation of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa and the message of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights aspects of the victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. It welcomed the Centre's approach to achieving its goals, in particular in the area of tracking population movements and their impact on peace and security in Central Africa.

150. The Committee acknowledged that population movements pose challenges in the subregion with regard to both human security and respect for human rights. However, member States are also aware of the fact that migrations represent an opportunity for improved political and economic integration in Central Africa. For that reason, they have stated that they are sensitive to the efforts of the Centre to strengthen dialogue among the States and organizations of the subregion on matters related to migration and human rights. In this context, the Committee encouraged member States to take on board the results of the subregional dialogue on migration and human rights hosted by the Centre in Yaoundé from 6 to 8 December 2010. The issues in question included, inter alia, the need to ratify and implement the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the harmonization of domestic legislation with international human rights norms, including obligations under international human rights instruments in the area of migration.

151. In addition, there are the recommendations on the adoption and implementation of national migration management policies with a human rights-based approach, capacity-building for those involved in population movement and human rights management, as well as the establishment of multisectoral structures for migration and human rights cooperation, exchange and dialogue, with effective civil society participation.

152. The Committee also strongly condemned trafficking in persons in all its forms, wherever it is practiced. In this context, it welcomed the initiatives of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights aspects of the victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to combat this phenomenon.

153. The Committee encouraged member States to implement the multilateral regional cooperation agreement to combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in West and Central Africa, which was concluded in 2006 between ECCAS and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It reiterated its support for the Centre's activities and expressed its satisfaction with the work done during the period under consideration.

154. Lastly, the Committee again encouraged the Centre to continue its assistance to intergovernmental organizations in the subregion, State institutions and civil society organizations in the area of human rights and democracy in Central Africa.

XII. Review of the financial situation of the Committee: Implementation of the Libreville Declaration by member States

155. The Committee noted the steps taken by member States to discharge their financial obligations related to the implementation of the Libreville Declaration. It thanked the States which had already made their contributions to the Committee's Trust Fund.

156. The Committee encouraged all member States to strive to make regular voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund. It also called upon other United Nations Member States and donors to make financial contributions to the Committee's Trust Fund.

XIII. Date and place of the next meeting

157. The Committee decided to hold its thirty-third ministerial meeting in Bangui during the first two weeks of September 2011.

158. The exact dates of the meeting will be communicated to the member States at a later time.

159. The Committee decided that the thirty-fourth ministerial meeting will be held in Bujumbura.

XIV. Other matters, including the impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa

160. The Committee heard with interest the briefings of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe on the impact of climate change on peace and stability in the subregion. There was an exchange of views among States on this phenomenon, which represents a real threat to institutional stability and public tranquillity.

161. The Committee expressed its concern regarding the continued deterioration of the Congo Basin, which represents a real threat and a factor of instability. It appealed to the international community to support environmental preservation in the Congo Basin.

162. The Committee also welcomed the organization of the first Summit of the three tropical forest basins, to be held in June 2011 in Brazzaville.

163. With regard to its working methods, the Committee recommended that starting with the thirty-third ministerial meeting, the Secretariat organize the expert session in two stages. The first stage, to take place during the first two days of work, would be dedicated to the general debate, and the second phase, to take place on the third day, would consist of the thematic debates.

164. Following the presentation by the delegation of Gabon, the Committee decided to include on the agenda of upcoming ministerial meetings consideration of General Assembly resolution 65/189, adopted in December 2010, entitled International Widows' Day, on the situation of widows and their children.

XV. Adoption of the report of the thirty-second ministerial meeting

165. The Committee adopted the present report on 16 March 2011. It congratulated the Secretariat on its professionalism and the quality of its work.

166. The Committee reiterated to the Secretary-General of the United Nations its gratitude for the revitalization of its work and for his contribution to peace and security in Central Africa.

C. Expression of thanks

167. The following expression of thanks was read out:

> "We, representatives of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered on the occasion of the thirty-second ministerial meeting, from 12 to 16 March 2011, in Sao Tome, Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe;
>
> – Reaffirm our attachment to the ideals of peace, stability and security that are so necessary for our respective peoples and for the socio-economic development of our subregion;
>
> – Welcome the efforts made by our countries, individually and collectively, to promote peace, security, stability and development;

– Welcome the atmosphere of conviviality, brotherhood and mutual trust that has prevailed throughout our work;

– Express our sincere thanks and our profound gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, and to the Government and people of Sao Tome and Principe, for the warm and fraternal welcome we have received during our stay in the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe."

• Sao Tome, 16 March 2011

Annex I

Sao Tome Declaration on a Central African Common Position on the Arms Trade Treaty

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered in Sao Tome from 12 to 16 March 2011, on the occasion of the thirty-second ministerial meeting of the Committee,

Recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/48, by which it decided to convene a United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2012;

Striving to play a major role in the negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty in order to defend the concerns of Central Africa about the illicit trade and trafficking in small arms and light weapons;

Considering the need for Central Africa, in the interests of the subregion, to adopt a common and coordinated position on the development of the Arms Trade Treaty;

Guided by:

(a) The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects;

(b) The Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;

(c) The International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons;

(d) United Nations Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) on suppression of the financing of terrorism and General Assembly resolution 60/288 on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy;

(e) The Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons;

(f) The Non-Aggression Pact of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS);

(g) The Mutual Assistance Pact of ECCAS;

(h) The Treaty establishing ECCAS;

(i) The Protocol relating to the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa;

(j) The Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities for the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action;

(k) The Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (Kinshasa Convention);

(l) The Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa,

Recognizing that arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation are essential for the maintenance of international peace and security, and for developmer ;

Confirming our commitment to the following fundamental principles:

(a) The purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Constitutive Act of the African Union;

(b) The inherent right of all States to individual and collective self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations; as well as the Non-Aggression Pact of ECCAS and the Mutual Assistance Pact of ECCAS;

(c) The general prohibition on the use of force and respect for the principles of the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations;

(d) The purposes and principles of the Protocol relating to the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, and of the Kinshasa Convention;

(e) Recognition of the primary responsibility of States for the trade in and transfer of conventional arms, and of the respective responsibilities of exporters and importers;

(f) The transfer of conventional arms, particularly small arms and light weapons, must be expressly authorized by the relevant governmental authorities, and transfers to non-State actors must be clearly prohibited;

(g) The right of all States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and possess conventional arms for their legitimate self-defence and security needs, for the maintenance of order and in order to participate in peace support operations;

(h) The obligation of all States to fully comply with arms embargoes imposed by the United Nations Security Council and any other decision taken pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations;

(i) The fulfilment of the other commitments, decisions or agreements undertaken at the international, regional and subregional levels on non-proliferation, the control of small arms and light weapons and disarmament to which the States involved in the transfer are parties;

(j) Compliance with international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as the rights and responsibilities of each State in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

(k) The obligation for States to take steps in order to prevent the diversion of conventional arms from legal channels to the illicit market;

(l) The need to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and all parts and components that can be used for their manufacture, repair and assembly,

Aware that the common position of States members of the Committee aims for a coordinated approach with respect to the Arms Trade Treaty, as the most efficient

and effective way to ensure that the interests of the subregion are clearly expressed and protected in the future Treaty,

We declare the following:

A. Scope of application of the Arms Trade Treaty

1. The Arms Trade Treaty shall take into account all types of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and all parts and components that can be used for their manufacture, repair and assembly.

2. The transactions or activities covered by the Arms Trade Treaty shall include import, export, transit, trans-shipment, transport, brokerage, licensing, transfers, leases, loans, disposals and donations.

3. Only transactions between States shall be authorized and, consequently, arms shall not be transferred to non-State actors.

B. Parameters and common criteria of the Arms Trade Treaty

4. The Arms Trade Treaty shall include a number of criteria for the evaluation of any arms transfers, with the requirement for a transfer to be refused when one of the agreed criteria has not been met. These criteria shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) Compliance of the arms transfer with the international legal obligations undertaken by the State in question, including the obligations laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations Security Council resolutions on arms embargoes and other legally binding international and regional instruments to which the State is a party or customary international law;

(b) The risk that the arms to be transferred might have a negative impact on national, regional and international security and stability, and on sustainable socio-economic development;

(c) The risk that the arms to be transferred might provoke, exacerbate or prolong existing conflicts or tensions, or be used to commit terrorist acts;

(d) The risk of weapons diversion, including diversion to illegal markets, for unintended uses, or to unauthorized end-users or non-State actors;

(e) The risk that the arms to be transferred might be used to commit massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

C. Implementation and enforcement of the Arms Trade Treaty

5. The States members of the Committee shall accede to an Arms Trade Treaty that imposes national obligations upon them and is supported by an international body which provides assistance with implementation, enforcement, verification and/or monitoring.

It is therefore necessary:

(a) To identify, under national regulations and legislation, the authorities responsible for monitoring and issuing licences for arms transfers;

(b) To agree on a number of minimum criteria for the issuance of end-use and end-user certificates and to safeguard their security;

(c) To compile biennial reports on decisions and activities involving transfers to a specialized body, taking into account opportunities for regional reports;

(d) To agree on the level of detail and on the nature and extent of the information required in the reports;

(e) To build national capacities, where necessary, for the effective preparation of reports;

(f) To agree on registration and stockpile management procedures;

(g) To agree on dispute settlement procedures and mechanisms;

(h) To establish an international body for implementation support whose nature, costs and mandate are subject to agreement;

(i) To establish a fund to finance assistance to victims and other activities related to the promotion of the Arms Trade Treaty;

(j) To include international cooperation and assistance in the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, including to promote confidence and transparency in arms flows;

(k) To establish verification mechanisms and procedures, and to provide penalties for violations of the Arms Trade Treaty.

D. Signature and ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty

6. The States members of the Committee undertake to sign an Arms Trade Treaty establishing the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms, including small arms, to which the greatest possible number of United Nations members shall accede in an open and transparent manner.

7. The States members of the Committee undertake to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty in the shortest time possible, in compliance with the national procedures in force. They urge the secretariat of ECCAS and all other relevant partners to take appropriate measures to launch an effective and efficient advocacy and awareness-raising campaign for the swift ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty, once adopted.

E. Implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty

8. The States members of the Committee are wholly responsible for the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. However, with the support of the secretariat of ECCAS, the Committee and all other relevant partners, they may wish to benefit from international cooperation and assistance for the efficient implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

9. The secretariat of ECCAS and the Committee shall work with the international body serving as the secretariat in monitoring and supervising the implementation by States members of the Committee of the obligations arising from the Arms Trade Treaty.

10. The secretariat of ECCAS, in cooperation with the Committee, shall take urgent steps to build the capacities required for the ECCAS small arms unit to coordinate the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention and to monitor implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, following its adoption.

F. Partnership with civil society

11. The States members of the Committee, the secretariat of ECCAS and the Committee shall facilitate the mobilization of civil society organizations and shall work in partnership with them:

(a) To support the development of a strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty;

(b) To promote the ratification and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

To those ends, from the negotiation phase until the adoption phase of the Arms Trade Treaty, we intend:

(a) To ensure our full and effective participation in the different negotiation phases and relevant forums related to the Arms Trade Treaty;

(b) To increase understanding of the issues, challenges and opportunities associated with the Arms Trade Treaty for the region in our respective jurisdictions, with the support of the secretariat of ECCAS, the Committee and all other relevant partners;

(c) To work together in order to harmonize our different positions on the key elements for an effective and balanced Treaty;

(d) To use the Kinshasa Convention as a reference point for convergence among the positions of Central African States;

(e) To promote a coordinated approach with the African Union and other regional economic communities for the adoption of a common African position in order to ensure active participation in the negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty;

(f) To reach out to regional groups, such as the European Union, the Caribbean Community, the Southern Common Market, other African regional economic communities or individual States, through the embassies and permanent missions of Central African States, and with the support of the secretariat of ECCAS and all other relevant partners, in order to obtain support for our position on the future Arms Trade Treaty;

(g) To promote greater synergies between the secretariat of ECCAS and all relevant partners, and the embassies and permanent missions of the States of the subregion, for more effective information sharing and to promote the common position of Central Africa.

In witness whereof, we, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, or our designated representatives, have adopted this Declaration.

Done in Sao Tome, 16 March 2011.

[Original: French]

(*Signed*) Samuel **Fernandes de Carvalho**
Chargé d'affaires of the Republic of Angola
to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe

(*Signed*) Alain Guillaume **Bunyoni**
Minister of Public Security
Republic of Burundi

(*Signed*) Desire Jean Claude **Owono-Menguele**
Acting Director for the United Nations and Decentralized Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cameroon

(*Signed*) Bernard **Bonda**
Ambassador, Chef de Cabinet
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Francophonie
Central African Republic

(*Signed*) Basile **Ikouebe**
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
Republic of Congo

(*Signed*) Jeannot Tshoha **Letamba**
Ambassador of the Republic of the Congo
to the Government of the Republic of Gabon

(*Signed*) Raphael **Ngazouze**
Minister delegate
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Gabon

(*Signed*) Angel Mokara **Moleila**
Secrétary of State for Consular Affairs
Republic of Equatorial Guinea

(*Signed*) Jean Damascene **Rudasingwa**
Director, Office of the President of the Republic of Rwanda

(*Signed*) Manuel Salvador **Dos Ramos**
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Communities
Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe

(*Signed*) Mahamat Nil **Abakar**
Military Coordinator
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation
Republic of Chad

Annex II

Statement of Cameroon on maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, and the fraternal people of Sao Tome, for the hospitality accorded to the Cameroon delegation since our arrival in this beautiful country.

I would also like to take this latest opportunity to share some information with you on the phenomenon of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, including on the Cameroon coast.

Allow me to underscore here that this issue, as I mentioned at our previous meeting in November 2010 in Brazzaville, is a major security challenge not only for our subregion, but also for the Gulf of Guinea and for the entire international community.

The frequency of acts of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea constitutes a grave threat to the security of our countries and their economies, to the movement of vessels and, therefore, to trade flows in this area, which, after the Gulf of Aden, is the most at risk from such acts.

In 2009, the International Maritime Bureau recorded 50 acts of maritime piracy in our area. Piracy figures increased in 2010, when 445 attacks were listed by the Bureau worldwide, i.e. 10 per cent more than a year earlier.

Maritime piracy has recently reappeared in the Gulf of Guinea, and particularly in the Bakassi peninsula, following the abduction of the sub-prefect of Akwa and his entourage on 6 February 2011. The taking of these hostages once again obliged my country, Cameroon, to use all conceivable means to ensure a successful outcome. I would also like to inform you of the attack against the Maritime Brigade in Mbonjo on the night of 6 to 7 February, which caused the loss of human life.

Our subregion has not stood idly by in the face of these destabilizing acts of piracy.

The institutional and operational measures taken individually and collectively by our States include the effective implementation of the Yaoundé Agreement of 6 May 2009 on securing the vital maritime interests of the ECCAS States and zone D of the Gulf of Guinea, the continued operation of joint patrols following the signature of the first maritime security plan, and the launch of the multinational coordination centre in Doula and of the Centre régional de sécurisation maritime de l'Afrique centrale in Pointe-Noire.

We would like to take this opportunity to appeal to all Member States, stakeholders and international partners to provide the agencies set up with the means to carry out their missions effectively, as some fraternal countries already do, notably France and the United States of America.

In this connection, Cameroon wishes to announce that it stands ready to host the International Conference on Maritime Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea that all of our States and ECCAS have been calling for these past years.

Our States should therefore consider the modalities for holding this conference within a short timeframe, in consultation with ECCAS which is responsible for organizing it. Cameroon could then follow this up with ECCAS, the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in order to capitalize on the interest that is likely to arise from the announcement of the decision to hold this important conference in Cameroon. Thank you for your kind attention.